

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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R 081459Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5526

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 13156

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

FOR ASST SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN FROM AMBASSADOR VAKY

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: ABUD, EMIN, ENRG

SUBJ: REGIONAL RESOURCE OFFICER

REF: STATE 271221

1. I APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS REFTEL. LET ME SAY AT THE OUTSET THAT IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO QUESTION THE REGIONAL RESOURCE OFFICER CONCEPT PER SE; FROM WHERE I SIT I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING ALL THE ARGUMENTS OR CONSIDERATIONS AND I DO NOT PRESUME TO JUDGE THE MERITS OF SUCH A WORLDWIDE CONCEPT.

2. MY POINT IS TMAT I CANNOT AGREE TO DOUBLE-HATTING OUR ERSTWHILE PETROLEUM ATTACHE AND GIVING HIM REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. AS YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE, OIL IS THE NAME OF THE GAME HERE. GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE, ACTIVITY, SCOPE AND PECULIAR NATURE OF THE PETROLEUM PICTURE IN VENEZUELA, KEEPING TRACK OF AND ANALYZING VENEZUELAN DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS SECTOR (AND IN RELATED MINIERAL SECTOR) IS A FULL-TIME JOB. IF WE DIVERT PART OF HIS ENERGIES AND TIME TO REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COVER THESE

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SECTORS SATISFACTORILY, AND WE WILL BE SHORTCHANGING

WASHINGTON AND OURSELVES WITH REGARD TO AN
INTENSELY IMPORTANT THEME. NOW MORE THAN EVER THIS
MAKES LITTLE SENSE.

3. I BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT OPTION ONE OF REFTTEL IS
THE BEST AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE, VIZ., THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A NEW POSITION OF SENIOR RESOURCE OFFICER AND THE
REDESIGNATION OF THE PRESENT PETROLEUM OFFICER AS A
JUNIOR RESOURCE OFFICER WITH THE SAME RESPONSIBILITIES
AS HERETOFORE.

4. I AM PREPARED TO ACCEPT OPTION ONE, BUT I WOULD
LIKE TO RAISE A BASIC QUESTION. WHY DOES THE SENIOR
REGIONAL RESOURCE OFFICER HAVE TO BE IN CARACAS IF
WE UTILIZE THIS ARRANGEMENT? I REFER TO PRACTICAL
CONSIDERATIONS HERE. CARACAS IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE
POST IN THE AREA SO THE COST PER MAN HOUR WILL BE
VERY HIGH. YOU ARE UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE OF OUR CURRENT
STRUGGLE OVER INADEQUATE HOUSING ALLOWANCES, THE MORALE
PROBLEMS WE HAVE IN THAT REGARD AND THE DIFFICULTY IN
FINDING ADEQUATE HOUSING GIVEN THE EXPLODING HOUSING
COSTS HERE. YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO APPRECIATE THAT
WE CANNOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE OFFICE SPACE NOR GOOD
ADMINISTRATIVE BACKUP. MOREOVER WITH THE OFFICIAL US
PRESENCE PROBABLY DUE TO EXPAND HERE ALREADY BECAUSE
OF FAA AND EA VENTURES, IS IT A GOOD IDEA TO INCREASE
THAT PRESENCE WITH THIS POSITION?

5. IN SHORT, GIVEN THE FACT THAT VENEZUELA WOULD BE
COVERED BY THE JUNIOR RESOURCE OFFICER, WHY CANNOT
THE SUPERVISING RESOURCE OFFICER--ABLE TO SUPERVISE
AND DRAW ON THE FORMER'S SERVICES--BE ESTABLISHED AT
ANOTHER POST IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA? OR ALTERNATIVELY
DOUBLE-HAT ANOTHER POSITION ELSEWHERE FOR THAT PURPOSE
WHERE THIS CAN BE DONE MORE FEASIBLY THAN HERE?
I WOULD LIKE TO ASK THAT THE DEPT
EXPLORE THIS POINT CAREFULLY BEFORE SETTING UP A NEW
REGIONAL POSITION HERE.
VAKY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, DEPARTMENTAL FISCAL ACTIVITIES, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ullricre
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CARACA13156
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760416-0235
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761171/aaaacjyi.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: 76 STATE 271221
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ullricre
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <08 NOV 2004 by ullricre>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REGIONAL RESOURCE OFFICER
TAGS: ABUD, EMIN, ENRG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006